

# noteworthy

Unique Technologies, New Product Categories, Licenses  
And Merchandising Programs Attract Attention

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**M**arket simply wouldn't be Market without an assortment of innovative and unusual introductions—and this season suppliers are pioneering unique technologies, entering new product categories, signing the latest licensing agreements and developing original merchandising concepts.

Home Source International is offering a comprehensive bedding collection called Solutions, applying technological resources to common issues. "These products are addressing a 'problem' in our everyday lives—hence the name Solutions," explains Phyllis Moore, vice president bed sourcing.

The program includes a 220-thread-count, 100 percent organic cotton sheet. "Only certified growers and processors qualify as 'organically grown,'" Moore explains. "No synthetically produced pesticides or fertilizers are used in the fields for at least three years, so the products are free of dangerous chemicals, and have low impact on the environment and water supply. With purity comes natural softness and breathability, and the fabric is stronger than conventional cotton due to the absence of harsh chemical processing."

Another Solutions sheet is a 250-thread-count 50/50 blend of Invista's Coolmax and cotton. "Coolmax is breathable, fast drying, energy-saving, maintains a proper body core temperature and is a superior moisture management fabric," Moore states.

The company also offers a 300-thread-count, all-cotton sheet with an aloe vera finish. "This product allows you to moisturize your skin in luxury," Moore points out. "The sheets feature micro-encapsulation of fiber to slowly release aloe vera, which is a non-toxic pure plant extract, not a textile chemical. The aloe leaf contains over 75 nutrients, 20 minerals, 18 amino acids and 12 vitamins."

Home Source International also is introducing Nano-Tech, a 300-thread-count all-cotton featuring a special process that changes the fiber at the molecular level and creates a sheet that is breathable, water repellent, stain resistant, wrinkle resistant, shrinkage resistant and durable for 50-plus launderings. Also new is Magna Soft, a 230-thread-count, all-cotton sheet with a soft, long-lasting finish.

Some suppliers are entering entirely new product categories. Blonder Home Accents, for instance, is adding ceramic kitchen accessories and plans to add kitchen textiles. "Kitchen accessories are our newest line addition," observes Brian Murphy, vice president of sales and marketing. "Our current accessories include small, medium and

large canisters, utensil holders, paper towel holders, salt and pepper shakers, spoon rests, trivets, tart burners, soap dispensers and coordinating wall borders. Also, because of the success of our bath textiles we are moving into kitchen textiles, where we will introduce coordinated placemats, oven mitts, potholders, kitchen towels and aprons."

French table linens producer Le Jacquard Français is adding new products to appeal to the American market, including new tablecloth sizes, new runners, square placemats that can be used in place of chargers, napkin rings, tablecloth clips and interesting knife rests. "Anything to do with cooking and food is an obvious source of inspiration," declares Stéphane Lacroix, general manager. "We are French, we love our food and we appreciate fine cuisine.

We want to brighten up everyday life, making tables festive and bringing pleasure to the modern woman while still using traditional jacquard weaving."

Czech manufacturer Veba Textil Zavody is offering new products designed for Americans. "The Carezza Collection was designed specially to meet the taste of the North American market in inconspicuous shades of cream, ivory, pale green, light blue and beige, ideal for mix-and-match coordination," states Jana Masinova, director of exports.

New licenses are a standby at Market; this season's premieres include Ty Pennington Style home fashions from Sears, featuring designs created by the carpenter from TLC's Trading Spaces, now starring in Extreme Makeover: Home Edition. Other new licenses include the Max and Lucy collection by AvonHome, spotlighting whimsical sayings on table linens, kitchen textiles, bath and beach towels; and the noted women's accessories maker Vera Bradley's new collection for Peacock Alley, featuring an assortment of classic toile and paisley designs with a coordinating all-over coral pattern.

Getting this great product out on the retail shelves requires some sharp merchandising and packaging acumen. Fortunately, there is no shortage of new marketing notions.

Hollander, for instance, is offering a Duvet Shop concept. "Hollander has a thriving down comforter business, but in comparison we sell very few duvet covers," notes Mason Carroll, senior vice president, fashion bedding. "This is due largely to the consumer's general lack of understanding of the benefits of duvet covers. In an effort to add some appeal to the product, we offer a gift-with-purchase concept

for duvet covers—in addition to a mini duvet cover set, we include two sham-stuffer pillows to complete the ensemble. This helps the product get more attention on the shelf because of its larger package size. The bonus concept will also work with matching throw pillows or a down alternative comforter." Free stuff? Now that's an idea everyone can appreciate!



Blonder Home Accents takes a whimsical approach to its new kitchen accessories with its Buon Appetito collection.



French supplier Le Jacquard Français is adding a variety of products to appeal to the American market, including Carnet square placemats that can be used in place of chargers.